



**CANTON LAND
CONSERVATION TRUST
INC.
Fall 2005
Newsletter**

SOME VERY GOOD NEWS!

On November 17th the Canton Land Trust received \$85,747 in the eleventh round of Connecticut's Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant Program. This grant will be used to purchase forty three plus acres known as the "Sweeton Pasture Lot" on Bunker Hill Road. The Trust is delighted that we shall be able to preserve this historic property, which was used until the 1950s as pasture for the Sweeton family cows. In 1919 the original herd of cows, mainly Holsteins, was shipped down by railroad from Brattleboro, Vermont with Arthur Sweeton II supervising the cows on the overnight trip. The ladies were ultimately delivered to the Cherry Brook Station of the Central New England Railway. This station was located just east of Cherry Brook Bridge which the state is now enlarging.

After the cows landed, they were herded up Cherry Brook Road to the Sweeton farm on the corner of West and Meadow Roads. At that time the farm land went from Meadow Road to the twin bridges on West Road, and then west to Bunker Hill Road. This latter portion is where the "Pasture Lot" is located. Now forested, the protected land will help retain some of the area's rural character and offer another site for Land Trust trails and an extended area to observe Canton's flora and fauna.

In addition, the geology of the property is interesting. The high point is a ridge known as a *drumlin* which was formed by the retreating glacier. Sometime during the 1930s a neighbor down the valley was given permission to erect a weather vane on the ridge to help with local weather forecasts. Perhaps in time some of the view from that spot can be restored.

The Sweeton family was more than generous in the selling of this land. The Land Trust is most appreciative of their generosity, their sense of history and their consideration for the citizens of Canton.

Betty Stanley

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

WHY DO WE SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST?

Why do we support the Land Trust? To paraphrase Jill Ker Conway, former president of Smith College, first, we all need contact with open land, fresh air and the reassurance of nature's cycles as much as we need food and water. No matter how much we engineer built environments we humans are rooted in the earth and it sustains us. Secondly, we work for land conservation because preserving some ecological balance between humans and other species is essential for a sustainable world for future generations. Each unpolluted acre and each clear stream that we can protect is the most valuable gift we can leave behind for those who follow us.

There is still open space in Canton, but with each passing week there is less. With each loss Canton loses a bit more of its rural character and adds to the burden of providing services to the ever-increasing population. Your support has been vital in allowing us to accomplish what we've done to date, but more challenges await. Your continued generous support is extremely important to the Land Trust and the town we call home. We thank you for this support and belief in what we are doing. We look forward to seeing you on our trails. And we would welcome any ideas and suggestions you might have to help us continue to grow and improve.

OUR NEW BROCHURE

This fall the Land Trust published a new brochure created by our new director, Joanne Pierce. We had not anticipated that when Joanne agreed to do this project that we would also gain the valuable assistance of her thirteen-year-old son Trevor. Using his knowledge of the computer, he created from his mother's prose our new brochure in an eye-catching and readable form. For this we are indebted to Trevor, a busy young man who is also a competitive swimmer, a Boy Scout in Troop 177, a musician who plays the bassoon, clarinet and piano, and, last but not least, an eighth grade student in the Canton Middle School.

Thank you, Trevor. We look forward to doing future projects with you and your peers. It is gratifying and very important to have the next generation actively involved with our Land Trust.

Betty Stanley

"When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club

MEMORIES OF NOONTIME DIPS

Newsletter editor Dick Swibold of the Canton Land Conservation Trust has invited me, now that I am no longer a director, to recall some of my favorite memories regarding the Trust:

In my youth I enjoyed hiking with my grandfather, Frederick G. Humphrey, in his effort to find the boundaries of a 40-acre woodlot he had bought on Ratlum Mountain in the southwest corner of Barkhamsted. After he died in 1934 my grandmother gave me the 40 acres. Our family enjoyed camping out there for many years. These experiences influenced me to buy two more 4-acre adjacent parcels located in Canton with the hope of ultimately giving them to the land trust. I had come to think that this would be the *highest and best use* of this ridge-top land – to make it permanently available for the enjoyment of others.

Other gifts and sales have added over 1400 acres to Canton Land Trust holdings. The largest gift, over 500 acres, came from the Margaret and Tom Perry family. Canton residents will always owe them a debt of gratitude.

In 1973 we learned that Charlotte Craig had made the first gift of land to the new Trust. She was a neighbor of my parents, and she donated about one acre of her field on the southeast corner of Cherry Brook and East Mountain roads in Canton Center. Charlotte called it the Canton Center Green and wanted it kept as an open field. Along Cherry Brook Road she planted what is now an imposing row of white pines.

One of my earliest hikes with Trust members was a visit to the Potter lot on

the south side of Meadow Road. I looked forward to seeing some meadowlands of my youth. While attending nearby Center School (grades 1-4), we boys enjoyed early June, noontime dips in “Benny’s Hole,” (no girls allowed), the deepest swimming hole in Cherry Brook on the Benjamin Case farm. On our Trust visit years later we found no sign of “Benny’s Hole.” Beavers had dammed and flooded the Potter meadow, and changed the landscape. To traverse the new swamp was, and still is, difficult.

I joined a group of Trust members to locate and improve trails. A log bridge built with the guidance of Ted Cowles impressed me. Ted knew how to cut and move heavy logs and stones, to make stone abutments, and to construct a trail bridge over a small brook on the Ray Smith Trail in the Mary Conklin 107-acre parcel.

I became a member of the Trust and in 1981 a Director. From 1981-1989 I served as Treasurer. As a retired civil engineer I enjoyed keeping longhand accounts (no computers then!), as well as surveying and mapping, and keeping track of deeds and maps for the Trust.

It was a pleasure and privilege to serve as a director for so many years – under several presidents who have led us so well: Dick Sanger, Bob Ferguson, Fred Feibel, Mike Galuszai, Alan Duncan, Ray Smith, and currently, Betty Stanley.

I recommend to all Canton young folks that you enjoy our Land Trust holdings and that you support the CLCT with your memberships and volunteer services.

Arthur Sweeton III, Director Emeritus

AQUIFERS: AN INTERVIEW

It has been a topsy-turvy year, weather wise. Drought-like conditions persisted from late spring into early fall. Then, in October the skies opened and it rained and rained, then rained some more. In fact, October was the second rainiest month on record, surpassed only by August of 1955, the year of the great flood. In a short span of time, wells went from empty to overflowing. These unusual conditions led many Canton residents to take a greater interest in the science of hydrogeology. Unfortunately, few of us have much understanding of water as it courses below the earth's surface.

In order to better understand the processes involved, this newsletter reporter interviewed **Margery Winters**, who is on the staff at Roaring Brook Nature Center. With a master's degree in Physical Geography and an undergraduate degree in Geology, Margery serves on the Simsbury Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency and has worked for river advocacy organizations in Connecticut.

CLCT: Exactly what is hydrogeology?

Hydrogeology is a branch of the earth sciences dealing with the flow of water through underground layers of water-bearing permeable or fractured rock, or materials such as sand and gravel. Any geologic material that can supply useful quantities of ground water to natural springs and water wells is called an aquifer.

CLCT: We hear a lot about aquifers. Where does underground water come from and where does it go? How important are they in providing us with clean, fresh water?

Water in aquifers ultimately comes from rainwater or surface water seeping down through the soil eventually reaching a saturated zone and replenishing a groundwater supply aquifer. This process is called *recharge* and can take place in a matter of days or hundreds of years depending on the depth and nature of the aquifer. There are many complex natural processes that determine how much rainwater actually recharges an aquifer instead of being evaporated, consumed by plants and animals, or simply running off the ground surface into streams, rivers, lakes and oceans.

In Connecticut, groundwater supplies one third of public water supply needs and is an important water resource in rural areas. Ground water is often of much higher quality than surface water. As surface waters filter through overlying soils, organic matter, clays, bacteria and other organisms such as plant roots in soils and subsoils often do an exceptional job of cleaning up many natural pollutants or removing excess nutrients that may be present in the surface water before it seeps into the underlying aquifer.

CLCT: It makes sense that in times of drought the underground water supplies shrink and at times of heavy rainfall they increase. But, is it really that simple or are there other things that come into play that may affect the amount of water in the ground?

Ground water levels often rise and fall after periods of heavy precipitation or during periods of drought but they do so more slowly than surface water levels. In Connecticut

many of our aquifers are recharged primarily by spring rains and snowmelt. This water is essentially stored in the ground and seeps back into rivers and streams during periods of low precipitation. It is this stored groundwater that keeps many rivers flowing in the summer. When ground water levels fall below the bottom of the riverbed, the river runs dry.

Pumping well water can speed up the process of lowering groundwater levels and often affects nearby stream flows or pond levels. During the drought this past summer, many rivers and ponds went dry as ground water levels fell due in part to lack of rain as well as excess demands on groundwater by homeowners and public water companies which pumped even more water to help irrigate thirsty lawns. In some Connecticut communities summer water use is five times higher than winter water use because of lawn irrigation. These irrigation demands cause great stress to the nearby streams and ponds and have a high economic cost as well in that they may require that our public water systems be many times larger than necessary to meet non-irrigation water demands.

Groundwater levels can also be affected by land use. In heavily built up areas with many hard surfaces such as road, roofs and parking lots, rainfall runs rapidly off these surfaces and is prevented from seeping back into the ground. In urban areas such as Boston, ground water levels have been falling and aquifer recharge has been decreasing. This lack of recharge has been expensive: wells have been redrilled to greater depths and the foundations of buildings have cracked as the ground has subsided with falling groundwater levels.

CLCT: Do our above ground activities have any effect upon aquifers?

Surface water and ground water are often treated as if they were separate but they should be viewed as the same resource. They are commonly connected hydraulically but the interactions are difficult to observe and measure. Pollution of surface water can cause degradation of ground water quality and, conversely, pollution of ground water can degrade surface water. It is important to understand that clean groundwater requires clean surface water recharge and vice versa.

Because of these connections, the State has been working on regulations that restrict or regulate the activity of some of the most potentially polluting land use activities from drinking water aquifer recharge areas. Several towns resisted these regulations believing they may negatively impact the economic development of their town. A stronger argument could be made that degradation of a town's water supply would have significantly more negative impact on a town's development

CLCT: Why is open space important in the protection of aquifers?

Open space can provide areas for essential aquifer recharge and filtration of surface water especially where open space overlaps areas of aquifer recharge. It is important to identify those parts of the State where our ground water is most likely to be replenished so that we can attempt to protect these vital resources from pollution and naysand-use practices that will decrease the quality and availability of clean water.

Jay Kaplan

CLCT VOLUNTEERS AT IT AGAIN: TRAIL BUILDING

On two recent Saturdays CLCT volunteers set out to build a new trail. Located on the east side of Breezy Hill Road just north of where the road turns to dirt is what's known as "the old Taylor Road," which heads off to the northeast. It is here that the new CLCT trail work began under a low and heavy sky.

The first quarter mile of trail wends through thick mountain laurel under a high hardwood canopy, up and down over the underlying rock formations. The crew wielded their loppers and saws in a quiet battle to claim a path, along with plenty of bending over and tugging to free the trail of plant roots, which would otherwise re-sprout. As we worked we would leapfrog each other, and made slow but steady progress.

As the trail turns sharply to the south, it climbs up over one more hump and through another dense section of mountain laurel before starting its descent down a shoulder. The woods grow more open under a high hardwood canopy of oak, hickory, birch and beech. The work is easier in this section, mostly removing blueberries and saplings, plus clearing branches and other forest detritus. As we work we discuss the line of the trail and make field expedient changes that will provide appealing features for future hikers. Now we're moving along quite quickly, with a mostly open floor in the forest, clearing branches, stepping down off the shoulder towards a gurgling stream. Some mossy rocks provide a narrow gap several feet deep where a hiker can step easily across the stream.

The crew worked on for another quarter mile or so, and also did some forward scouting to ensure we were taking the trail in the right direction to meet up with the previously built trail of Eagle Scout **Joseph Haller**. At this point the rain began to fall in earnest and we decided to call it a day.

Two weeks later the weather was sunny and warm. It was a classic Indian summer day, so we all quickly worked up a sweat. With a new crew we began the trail clearing where we had left off with the objective of connecting with the previously established yellow blazed trail, which we decided to re-clear as it was being encroached upon by saplings and windfall. In addition, we installed several drainage logs diagonally across the trail on the steep pitch above the stream. Logs were laid in place across the stream and will provide the supports for a future bridge. Yellow blazes will be added to complete this section of the trail.

By the end of our second day we had added a wonderful new stretch of trail to this beautiful piece of CLCT property. Try it out by starting at the southern end at the foot of Breezy Hill Road just north of Indian Hill Road. The trail heads northeast around a shoulder, and then north. Here it parallels a bubbling brook with several small but spectacular waterfalls and moss covered tumbles of large rocks. Now proceed onto the stretch that we had just cleared. The trail continues back out to the exit at the old Taylor Road/Breezy Hill junction. This new trail adds a pleasant loop east of Breezy Hill Road along with the loops in the Sun, Wind and Woodland Preserve. Take a walk on it, see what you think.

Special thanks to our volunteers: **Bill Duncan, Dave and Suzy Enos, Eric Jackson, Alis Ohlheiser, Eleanor Smith, Betty Stanley, and Doug Williams**

Drew Stone

REGULARLY SCHEDULED WORK PARTIES

Beginning on January 20, 2006 the CLCT will schedule regular work parties on the fourth Saturday of every month. Volunteers will meet at 9 AM and work until noon. Work will be related to CLCT properties and trails, much of it the marking, cleaning and improving of trails and their surroundings.

Members who are on the Work Party email list will be reminded monthly of plans for the upcoming session. The Land Trust will supply any necessary special equipment. For other work, bring tools from home that you are comfortable working with. If you wish to be added to the email list, contact Drew Stone at drew.stone@post.harvard.edu. If you don't use email, call him at 693-4350. If you can't make a scheduled event, but are looking for a small project to do on your own, let Drew know that, too.

Our properties are large and there is much to be done. Help is needed! Come with family and friends. Work parties will meet at the Canton Center General Store at 9 AM on the fourth Saturday of every month.

Baldwin Terry

Board of Directors

Betty Stanley	President
Jay Weintraub	Vice President
Charlie DeWeese	Secretary
Sara Campbell	Treasurer
Ted Cowles	John Pech
Bill Crowe	Joanne Pierce
Bill Duncan	Bob Porter
Fred Feibel	Elenor Smith
Jay Kaplan	Drew Stone
Peter Lamb	Dick Swibold
Art Mauger	Bunny Terry
Scott McAlindin	Chris Williams
Mary Ellen Mullins	

NEW DIRECTORS

We welcome three new directors to our CLCT board:

Bill Duncan. Bill Duncan and his wife Susan moved to Canton in 1997, relocating from Simsbury, where they had lived since 1975. Bill is a graduate of Princeton and of Columbia Law School and served with the U.S. Naval Reserve in Vietnam and San Diego. He worked with CIGNA for 29 years in its investment law division where he specialized in institutional private placements and real estate investment. He is a past president of the American College of Investment Counsel. In 1993 he headed an industry project that published a set of simplified forms and best practices for institutional private placements that became the standard in the United States, Europe and the Pacific Rim. Having retired in 2004, Bill enjoys hiking, skiing, swimming, sailing, travel and outdoor photography. He is intrigued with finding histories of Canton's old roads and land holdings.

Joanne Pierce. Joanne Pierce and her husband Michael and son Trevor moved to Connecticut in 1995. They live on Case Street in a house that was built in 1748 and love the peace and rural nature of the town. Since moving to Canton they have added two new family members: dog Matty and cat Minou. Prior to their Canton move, the Pierces lived and worked in the Washington, D.C. and New York City areas. Michael is an attorney employed by ESPN and Trevor attends Canton Middle School.

Joanne describes herself as a stay-at-home mom with a small antiques business. She also tutors students in French and Spanish. She is involved in many community activities: Cherry Brook Garden Club, Friends of the Library, Canton Food Bank, Canton Middle School PTO. She also sits on the board of Trevor's swim team. Joanne's favorite hobbies and pastimes include gardening, travel, antiques, reading, and working on knitting and needlepoint projects.

Drew Stone. Drew Stone's background is in high tech business. He graduated from Harvard in 1984 with a B.A. in physics. Since then he has worked in the field of photonics (in broad terms, the science of light) in large public companies and in private corporations. He is currently an entrepreneur in a small business located in the north end of Simsbury. He lives in North Canton with his wife Cheryl, two sons, a bird, three cats and a dog.

A resident of Canton for 14 years, Drew walks Land Trust trails regularly. He believes that preserving open space and natural habitat is an important mission for his generation and looks forward to contributing time and effort to support the CLCT as a force that can have a positive impact on the conservation of our natural resources.

TRAILBLAZER EVENTS

The Trailblazers program for kids (and their parents) has continued to be our most successful activity, with up to 100 people now showing up each month. The first event of the season was in October at the Mary Conklin Preserve and involved looking for "letterboxes." Letterboxing is a sport that involves following clues to find boxes hidden in the forest. Clues for eight different letterboxes at Mary Conklin will be up on the Canton Land Trust website soon (www.cantonlandtrust.org).

Last year a new tradition was started and each month one Trailblazer is awarded custody of the "chucka" stick. That child decorates it, and a new contest is held to pass it on to another Trailblazer. Chucka looks more interesting with each passing month.

In November, the Trailblazers went on a hayride at Capen Cabin and had a cookout. There was also a speaker who told the kids about how to "stay put stay dry" -- what to do if you get lost in the woods. He also gave the Trailblazers whistles and lanyards, courtesy of EMS.

For December, the Trailblazers will hike the Charlotte Craig Trail with Santa on Saturday the 10th, in conjunction with the Christmas Tree Sale at the Smith Tree Farm.

Mary Ellen Mullins and Charlie DeWeese

THIS NEWS JUST IN: Chris Williams reports photo contest winners.

- First place went to **Alden Warner**. He received a sundial.
- Second place was a tie between **Betty Stanley** and **Richard Gurry**. They each received a Moto Photo gift certificate.
- Third place was awarded to **T. Schrijn**.
- Chris extends her thanks to **Candace LaFleur** and **Wendy Rosenberg**.



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Canton, CT
Permit No. 10

P.O. Box 41
Canton Center, CT 06020

To: POSTAL PATRON
or
BOXHOLDER



Please renew your membership or join the Canton Land Conservation Trust.
We are a public, town-wide organization and we need your help!

CALENDAR FALL/WINTER 2005--2006

December			
	10	9-2	Xmas tree sale. Hot chocolate & cookies served.
	11		Sale snow date
January			
	15	1 PM	XC skiing & snow shoeing at Breezy Hill Farm. Call Betty Stanley for details. 693-2074
February			
	TBA		Moonlight hike
April			
	18		Spring membership dinner and speaker: Robert M. Thorson, Prof. of Geology, UConn, and member of the Courant's "Place" board of contributors. Details TBA via web site.

*Trail Blazer activities will be announced via flyers at Canton schools & our web site.